

39. DISTRIBUTION OF *OBERONIA BRACHYPHYLLA* BLATT. & MCCANN — A RARE, ENDEMIC ORCHID OF WESTERN GHATS, INDIA

(With two text-figures)

Oberonia brachyphylla Blatt. & McCann is one of the rare orchids listed in the red data book of Indian plants (Nayar and Sastry 1988). This tiny little orchid was described by Blatter and McCann (1931) from a detailed illustration prepared by T.R. Bell & Miss Bell, made from live specimens collected in North Kanara (Santapau and Kapadia 1966). Later, Santapau and Kapadia (loc. cit.) also collected it from North Kanara and reported it to be apparently endemic to North Kanara. Subsequent workers have recorded this species from other parts of Western Ghats. Joseph and Vajravelu (1976) reported it from Palghat district, Kerala. In 1981, Abraham and Vatsala reported it from Ponmudi, Kerala, which seems to be the southernmost recorded distribution of this orchid. Ansari *et al.* (1982) reported its distribution from North Kanara and Kerala, based on Santapau and Kapadia (loc. cit.), and Joseph and Vajravelu (loc. cit.). But it is interesting to note that Vajravelu (1988), while discussing its distribution, has not taken North Kanara, Karnataka and Ponmudi, Kerala into account and mentioned only Hassan and Palghat districts. Ansari and Balakrishnan (1990) in their revision of *Oberonia* species mentioned only Maharashtra and Kerala as distribution centres. There is no mention of this species in *FLORA OF MAHARASHTRA* by Lakshminarasimhan (1996). During our floristic survey of endemic plants of Western Ghats, we collected this species from two more localities: 1. Molem-Anmode, Goa. 2. Agumbe, Shimoga district, Karnataka. While examining the specimens at MH, the specimens from Chikmagalur, Karnataka were also noticed. Thus, it was observed that the distribution of this species was relatively unknown.

Small size and the lack of frequent and intensive collections could be the reasons for very few collected specimens of this species, as a result of which its distribution appeared to be restricted and fragmented. Now it is apparent that the species is distributed more or less continuously along the Western Ghats (Fig. 1). The specimens collected by us have been deposited in the Herbarium of the Department of Botany, Goa University.

Oberonia brachyphylla Blatt. & McCann in J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc. 35: 257, t.2.1931; Sant. & Kapad., Orch. Bombay 57. 1966; Sald. & Nicol., Fl. Hassan Dist. 838. 1976; Abraham and Vatsala, Int. Orch. 416, f. 116. 1981. Ansari

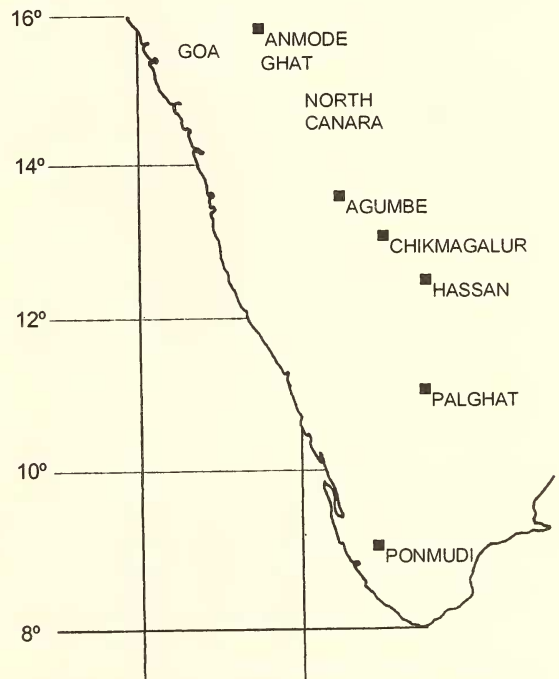


Fig. 1: Distribution of *Oberonia brachyphylla* Blatt. & McCann in Western Ghats

et al., J. Econ. Tax. Bot. 3: 114. 1982; Manilal, Fl. Silent Valley 296. 1988; Vajravelu, Fl. Palghat 486. 1990; Ansari & Balakrishnan, Orch. Monog. 38. 1990.

Fl. & Fr.: March-April.

Habitat: Epiphyte on *Garcinia* and *Ziziphus* spp.; on small twigs with moss, in open areas in evergreen forest patches.

Distribution: Western Ghats [Goa, Karnataka (N. Kanara, Shimoga, Chikmagalur, Hassan), Kerala (Palghat, Thiruvananthapuram district)]

Specimens examined: Molem-Anmode, Goa, Vaishali Joshi and S. Rajkumar 1528; Agumbe, Shimoga district, Karnataka, M.K. Janarthanam, Vaishali C. Joshi and S. Rajkumar, 14.iii.1998, *s.n.*; Yelaneer Ghat, Chikmagalur,

Vajravelu, 25.ii.1984 (MH); Mandampatty, Palghat, N.C. Nair 12.iv.1978, 56781 (MH); Mukkali, Palghat, Vajravelu 26.vii.1977, 49781 (MH).

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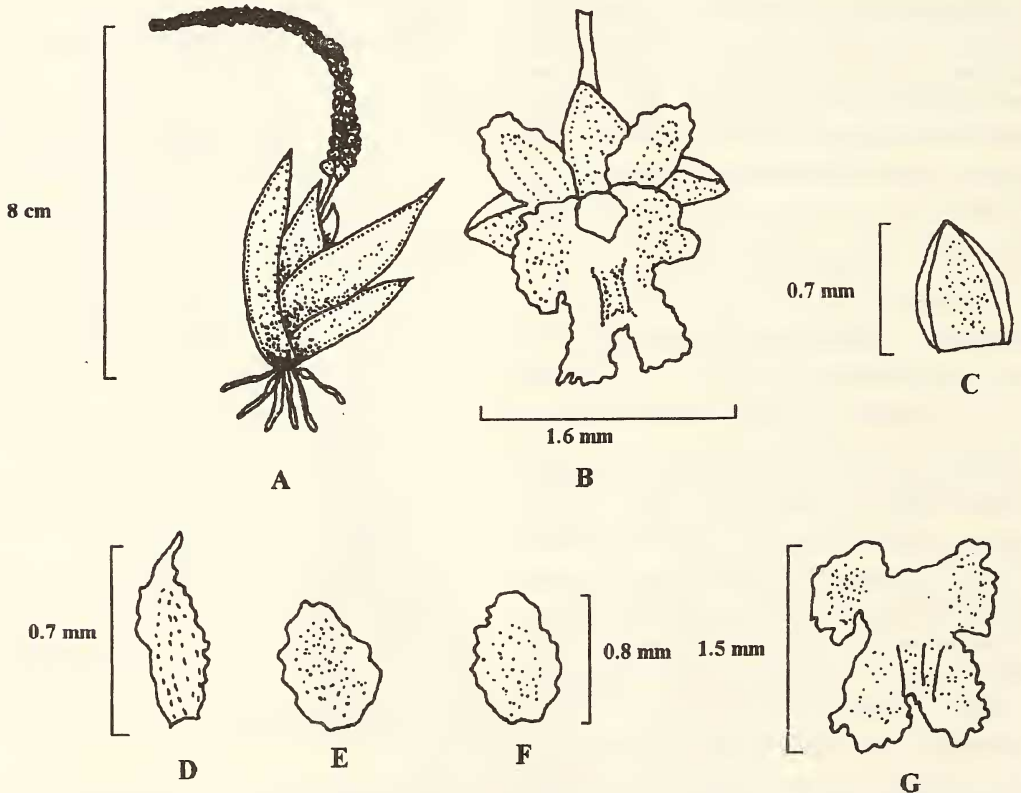


Fig. 2: *Oberonia brachyphylla* Blatt. & McCann A - habit; B - flower; C - dorsal sepal; D - lateral sepal; E & F - petals; G - lip

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40. NEW RECORDS OF THE FAMILY ERIOCAULACEAE FROM GOA

The species of the genus *Eriocaulon*, known as pipeworts, are commonly seen during the monsoon along wetlands and streams. These plants show very little variation in their vegetative characters, though floral variations which can be observed under the microscope are enough to segregate and identify the species. The first revision of this group in India was carried out by Fyson (1919-1921). This work is generally neglected as it was published in parts and the volumes are available in a few libraries only. This group was not represented by Dalgado (1898), published prior to Fyson (l.c.). Vartak (1966) reported only four species of *Eriocaulon*, all from outside the state of Goa, whereas Rao (1986) reported twelve species from Goa state. The latest revision by Ansari and Balakrishnan (1994) has clarity and is more authoritative. Cook (1996) provided keys based on floral characters, whereas Ansari and Balakrishnan (l.c.) relied more on seed characters. The specimens identified in the light of these recent works have added six new distributional records to the State of Goa.

The identification of the specimens was confirmed at Botanical Survey of India, Pune and MH, Coimbatore. The specimens have been deposited in the herbarium of Department of Botany, Goa University.

Eriocaulon fysonii Ansari & Balakr., *Eriocaul.* India 89. f. 28 1994; Cook, *Aqua. Wetland Pl. India* 195. 1996; Lakshminarsimhan

in Sharma *et al.*, *Fl. Maharashtra Monocot.* 752. 1996. *Eriocaulon cuspidatum* Dalz. var. *bracteata* Fyson in *J. Indian Bot.* 2: 318. 1921.

Note: Involucral bracts distinctly exceeding the head; seed appendages swollen at tip; found in puddles on lateritic plateaux; endemic to Western India.

Exsiccata: Goa, *Lolium*, M.K. Janarthanam 6, 24.viii.1996, Goa, *Lolium* V.C. Joshi & S. Rajkumar, 950, 10.ix.1997.

Eriocaulon lanceolatum Miq. ex Koernick in *Linnaea* 27: 656. 1856; Hook. f. *Fl. Brit. India* 6: 577. 1893; Cooke, *Fl. Bombay* 3: 357. 1967 (reprinted); Kulkarni, *Fl. Sindhurg* 474. 1988; Ansari & Balakr., *Eriocaul.* India 29. f. 6. 1994; Cook, *Aqua. Wetland Pl. India* 196. 1996. *Eriocaulon lanceolatum* var. *pilosum* Moldenke in *Phytologia* 3: 164. 1949; Almeida, *Fl. Savantwadi* 2: 63.1990; Lakshminarsimhan in Sharma *et al.*, *Fl. Maharashtra Monocot.* 257. 1996.

Note: Scape and involucral bracts pilose; found in open grassy areas; endemic to South West India.

Exsiccata: Goa, Gotmode, opp. Nestle, M.K. Janarthanam & S. Rajkumar 860. 9.viii.1997.

Eriocaulon palghatense Ansari & Balakr., *Eriocaul.* India 111. f. 37. 1994; Bhat, *Ind. J. Forestry* 2(1): 103 -104. 1997.

Note: Minute black headed herb; found on open lateritic plateaux covered with grass; earlier known only from Kerala (Ansari & Balakrishnan